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The Women's National Indian Association

By

MARY E. DEWEY

Corresponding Secretary of the Massachusetts Indian Association

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Of the

Formation and Achievements

OF

The Women's
National Indian Association in the
United States.

By

MARY E. DEWEY

Corresponding Secretary of The Massachusetts
Indian Association.

DECEMBER, 1900.

This paper was written at the request of the Department of Women's Work in the late Paris Exposition, and when prepared was endorsed by the Executive Board of The Women's National Indian Association, and again by the Annual Meeting of the Association, December 10th, 1900.

Historical Sketch.

IT IS twenty-one years since the origin of The Women's National Indian Association, the first national organization in America for improving the condition of the few remaining aboriginal inhabitants in the vast domain of the United States. These Indians (a name given to the race by Columbus, who imagined that he had reached India from the east,) have numbered during the last century 267,000, and are chiefly scattered over the country west of the Mississippi River.

The situation is peculiar. No other modern nation has had the charge of a large body of absolute savages in its very midst. The problem has been complicated by the enormously rapid growth of the American population, owing to an immigration more extensive than the world ever saw before. The demand for land crowded the Indians back from the Atlantic coast almost to the Rocky Mountains, and then the settlement of California opened a similar pressure from the Pacific side till, partly by purchase and partly by force, the

whole continent became the property of the white intruders. More or less injustice on one side and revenge on the other was inevitable, and hostility grew so bitter that hardly a trace of friendliness was left. It is a sad and terrible story, and when it became plain who were the victors, and when legislation, still holding the sword fast in hand, began to make honest endeavors to set things right, it is not surprising that there were experiments, and mistakes, and discouragements, till a distinguished army officer was left to say in despair, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." This wretched epigram buzzed over the country like a bee with a sting in its tail. Antidotes were applied, but the bee had gone first, and made the strongest impression. The poison was injected, and is working mischief to this day. Indian barbarities are remembered, and not the atrocious injustice which incited them. Indian sufferings are forgotten, and terror and contempt have taken the place of pity. A race of high-spirited savages, helpless before the superiority of science and numbers, has been pushed to the wall, and the nation which has taken their land and their

place is slowly awakening to its manifest duty of seeing that they are compensated by all that is best in civilization for the miseries which its worst features have brought upon them.

The American Government has all along tried to be just to the red men. From the first it made laws showing honest consideration for them, and "treaties" which respected their rights. But the laws were evaded and the treaties broken, because a Republican Government is only the mirror of the people's mind, and the public opinion of America is hardly yet sufficiently enlightened on the subject of Indian rights to enforce their observance. A few schools were given them as early as 1819. An Indian Commissioner was created as a high officer of government in 1832, and Superintendents and Supervisors were appointed in their interests, while much direct personal missionary effort was made by individuals, societies and churches, to alleviate their hard lot. Still they remained outlaws, objects of hatred and alarm to our frontier settlements, and of military coercion to the government, till in 1872 new methods came into play under the influence of Gen.

Grant, while President, and Congress received the idea that these people were our wards and not our enemies, and that since we had made their former mode of life impossible by confining them to certain limits and destroying the game which had been their food, we owed them such reparation as could be given by instruction, clothing, and rations of beef and flour. Reservations had already been allotted to the several tribes, and now Agents were more carefully chosen, and the new era began in hope. But experience has shown the error of this well intended plan, for it was found that the gratuitous supply of food and clothing degraded the recipients, the want of occupation dulled them, the temptations of drink and gambling were stronger than ever, character was lowered, and that the savages were relegated to the meaner condition of paupers. Then also it was seen that the system required superhuman wisdom and goodness to make it successful in practice, but that even if the angelic guard had been detailed to administer it, no broad and wholesome civilization could ever result from permanent imprisonment and segregation. Individual

freedom, and the rough but healthy training by which

“Ground in yonder social mill,
We rub each other’s angles down,”

would yet have been wanting. Still it was a virtuous effort toward the fulfilment of a trust, and marked the fresh awakening of a sense of national duty, which is working like the slow strong turn of the tide in ocean depths, and must ere long in its majestic uplift be felt through the whole land, sweeping away the mean barriers of prejudice and avarice with the irresistible swell of justice and humanity. Toward this consummation the Association, whose short and vigorous life is to be described, has steadily labored, and its members have reason for gratitude to God that their work, begun and continued in His name, has received His blessing of fruitfulness.

It was in 1879, in the early years of this reform in Indian administration, that there arose in the mind of a Philadelphia woman, Mary L. Bonney, the idea of a popular petition to Government in behalf of the natural human rights of the Indians.

Miss Bonney was a teacher by profession and at the head of a large and successful

school for girls. She brought a mighty enthusiasm and a liberal purse to the Indian work she contemplated, but it was impossible for her to give the time and labor necessary to the success of the scheme. She opened her mind to a friend, Mrs. Amelia Stone Quinton, who entered so warmly into the subject that she gave her whole heart and strength to the work, and these two women, together and unaided, began the campaign. The petition was as follows :

*To the President of the United States, and to
the Senate and House of Representatives.*

“ We, the undersigned, men and women of the United States, resident in or near ——— do most respectfully but most earnestly request the President and the Houses of Congress to take all needful steps to prevent the encroachments of white settlers upon Indian territory, and to guard the Indians in the enjoyment of all the rights which have been guaranteed to them on the faith of the nation.”

Seven thousand copies of this paper were printed, with an accompanying explanatory leaflet, and distributed by the two ladies,

and friends whom they interested, in no less than fifteen States during the summer of 1879, and before winter, the roll containing thousands of signatures was 300 feet long. Public interest had been aroused, and when in February, 1880, a few ladies presented the petition to President Hayes at the White House in Washington, and Judge Kelly brought it before the House of Representatives, it received respectful attention and was placed upon the Congressional records. That year four more ladies were added to the Volunteer Committee and another petition, more comprehensive in character asking protection for all reservations and for the full observance of treaties with Indians was circulated through all the States and Territories, obtaining 50,000 signatures. This also was received with consideration by Congress. It was presented to the Senate by the Hon. Henry L. Dawes, Senator from Massachusetts, already a well known friend to the Indians. His powerful speech on this occasion was widely published, and bore a part in the distinguished connection he has always held with Indian affairs.

There were then eight women upon the

Committee : Miss Bonney, Mrs. Quinton, Mrs. George Dana Boardman, Mrs. Mariné J. Chase, Miss Fanny Lea, Mrs. Mary C. Jones, Mrs. Margaretta Sheppard, and Mrs. Edward Cope. They held their first formal meeting in December, 1880, when at Miss Bonney's request Mrs. Chase was made Chairman, Mrs. Boardman, Treasurer, Mrs. Quinton being Organizer and Secretary. The Secretary reported her work during the previous twenty-two months. This, to quote the minutes of that date, "included the circulation of two petitions; the preparation and circulation of the literature published to accompany those petitions; the presentation of the aims and work of the Committee in missionary and other meetings, at anniversaries, associations, and Pastor's conferences in this and other States; the securing of two popular meetings, and the presentation in them of our Petition, with the general subject of Indian wrongs; the preparing articles for the press, with other writings, and much travelling and visiting in aid of some or all of these lines of work."

This report is typical of the energy and untiring industry which Mrs. Quinton has

from the beginning shown in the Association. A ready and persuasive speaker, she addressed audiences of every size and quality through the entire country, and by a happy mixture of clear statement and earnest feeling, she inspired them with some of her own burning sense of the wrongs still endured by Indians, and with the active sympathy that springs to their relief.

It was by her advice that the Association took a wholly unsectarian attitude, every important Protestant denomination being represented on its Executive Committee. The Catholics prefer to work apart. Although in close connection with churches and with the government, the Association has never admitted religious or political partisanship.

After three months Mrs. Chase resigned, and Miss Bonney was unanimously elected President in March, 1881. With five new members, the Committee adopted a written Constitution, taking the name of "The Indian Treaty-keeping and Protective Association," and the work of formal organization began. This involved the creation of associate committees in many States of the

Union, and before the close of the year thirteen such auxiliaries were formed, and a beginning made of the grand Federation which is now entitled to send delegates from forty States and ten great cities to the annual meeting of the National Association.

In 1881 the signatures of one hundred thousand persons were affixed to the following third petition, drawn up by Mrs. Quinton :

*To the President of the United States, and to
the Senate and House of Representatives
in Congress Assembled :*

“ WE, the undersigned men and women of these United States, do most respectfully but most earnestly pray our President and your honorable body ;

“ 1. To maintain all treaties with Indians with scrupulous fidelity until these compacts are modified or abrogated by the free and well-considered consent of the Indian tribes who were also parties to these treaties.

“ 2. That since the number of Indian children within the limits of the United States does not probably exceed sixty

thousand, or one-third the number of children in the public schools of some of our larger cities ; and since treaties with many tribes already bind our government to provide a teacher for every thirty Indian children in these tribes : therefore, we pray that a number of common schools, sufficient for the education of every child of every tribe, may be provided upon their reservations, and that industrial schools also may be established among them.

“ 3. We pray that a title in fee-simple to at least one hundred and sixty acres of land may be granted to any Indian within the reservation occupied by his tribe, when he desires to hold in severalty, and that said land shall be inalienable for twenty years.

“ 4. We also earnestly pray for the recognition of Indian personality and rights under the law, giving to Indians the protection of the law of the United States for their persons and property, and holding them strictly amenable to these laws ; also giving them increased encouragements to industry, and opportunity to trade, and securing to them full religious liberty.”

Extract from the Memorial Letter of the Indian Treaty-keeping and Protective Association presented with their petition of February 1st, 1882, to the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled:

“Again the women of a national Indian Association beg leave to present to your honorable body the petition they have circulated and received again from the people of the United States. Their roll represents, at a low estimate, considerably more than a hundred thousand citizens—instead of thirteen thousand as did their first, three years ago—and is an earnest plea for a righteous, speedy, and permanent settlement of the Indian question. * * * *

Permit an expression from the women of the Association who today present to your honorable body their third annual petition—an Association having sixteen State committees and one in each of the larger cities, with helpers in every State, all these committees being composed of patriotic Christian women—permit these to say that into their ears and hearts comes the cry of suffering, undefended, ever-endangered Indian women and children, and that this cry

is our appeal to you to secure for them legal protection ; that the plea of the Indian women for the sacred shield of law is the plea of the sisters, wives and mothers of this nation for them, the plea of all womanhood, indeed, on their behalf to you as legislators and as men. Permit us also to say, that in laboring by every means in our power to fill our land with a knowledge of the present condition of the Indians, and of our national obligations to them, we most deeply feel, that while justice demands the recognition of Indian personality before the law, (thus most surely and simply, it seems to us, securing to Indians protection and fostering care,) we yet feel that legislation securing this recognition will be an honor to the present Congress and to our beloved country. For this legislation we most earnestly and respectfully pray."

It is with pardonable pride that the annalist points to the wise and far-seeing statesmanship implied in those clauses of this petition which refer to the establishment of industrial schools, and to the giving of land in separate possession to such Indians as desire it. Twenty years

ago manual and industrial training was not the familiar idea which science and experience have since made it, and as the tribe rather than the individual was the subject of legislation, private ownership of land was not considered. To suggest that the government should give to Indians universal education, with land in individual possession, inalienable for a term of years, common law and citizenship, was in fact to propose a new policy, and Senator Dawes declared in a public address that "this policy was born of and nursed by The Women's National Indian Association." This is a tribute its members can never forget, nor their gratitude when the honorable gentleman fulfilled their earnest wishes in his Severalty Bill, which passed in February, 1887, and by its wise proviso of inalienability of the land for twenty-five years made such property-holding safe and useful. Since this act became law, more than 60,000 Indians have taken up individual allotments, 25,000 have become citizens and voters, and 35,000 pay taxes in aid of the government. The industrial products of Indian labor are valued at more than a million and a quarter of dollars

annually, and all educated Indians look to this Bill as the Magna Charta of their race. The day of its passage through Congress is kept right festally in the Indian department of the noble school at Hampton, Virginia, and in the great Indian school at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, with banquets, songs and speeches. Nearly fifteen hundred young Indians, boys and girls, in these two schools take part in these rejoicings, and show by their intelligence and aspiration what cultivation is doing for their race.

Returning to our annals, by the end of 1882 the Association changed its name to "The National Indian Association," and made ready for direct impression on the Indians themselves by preparing to carry friendly counsel and practical instruction to their homes, and to show them the use and comfort of schools, hospitals, and religious observances founded on love and not on terror.

At the close of 1883, The Indian Rights Association was formed by gentlemen of Philadelphia, and to avoid confusion and show them courtesy we enlarged our title by one word, became The Women's Na-

tional Indian Association, and amended our Constitution to its present form.

CONSTITUTION OF THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL INDIAN ASSOCIATION.

ARTICLE I.—NAME.

This organization shall be known as THE WOMEN'S NATIONAL INDIAN ASSOCIATION.

ARTICLE II.—OBJECT.

The two-fold object of this Association is :

1st. To awaken or strengthen that public sentiment which shall aid our government in its present Indian policy which, with due regard to the principles of justice involved in past treaties with Indian tribes, gradually but surely leads to the abolition of the reservation system, by giving to Indians the same protection of law, education and citizenship that are enjoyed by other races among us.

2d. By our own educational and mission work among Indians to hasten their civilization, Christianization and enfranchisement.

ARTICLE III.—WORK.

The work of this Association shall be the circulation of literature adapted to its objects; the circulation of memorials to Congress; the securing popular meetings, and articles for the press, and the adoption of such other measures as are, in the judgment of the Executive Board, best adapted to accomplish the work contemplated.

In November, 1884, Miss Bonney resigned the Presidency, while her interest in the work was in no degree lessened. In that year the Association showed its affection and respect by electing her Honorary President and proceeded to elect Mrs. Mary Lowe Dickinson, a well known writer, as President, an office which she filled for three years with much ability. In 1887 she resigned on account of illness, and Mrs. Quinton, General Secretary, was unani-

mously chosen President; an office which she still retains, and the duties of which she discharges with an active fidelity which only deep compassion could prompt, and only the divine assistance vouchsafed to disinterested efforts for the poor and suffering could sustain.

The work of organization has been already mentioned, but it is difficult to estimate the quality as well as quantity of labor that was needed to establish a truly national association in an absolutely unpopular cause. Thousands of miles had to be traveled, often under serious hardships from fatigue and exposure; intimate personal knowledge of Indian wrongs, needs, and capacities had to be obtained through visits to their homes, and this knowledge was to be carried, fresh and convincing, to push for room in busy minds, to root up old prejudices, and wake ignorant hearts to responsive fire; meetings of every kind were to be arranged for, from the simple gathering in a friend's parlor or at a village prayer meeting, to crowded audiences in great cities. Mrs. Quinton frequently, as Secretary, and as President, addressed from fifty to two hundred such meetings in a

year, going from Maine to California, and from Oregon to Florida, and the correspondence involved was of itself a great labor. There were endless letters and visits to members of the government, to influential persons of every description, to Auxiliaries already formed, and to those just taking shape ; memorials and petitions to Congress and the State Legislatures ; articles to be written for newspapers, and leaflets prepared, printed, and distributed by the thousand.

This was the work of construction, undertaken and kept up with untiring energy and devotion by the President and a few enthusiastic associates, some newly roused to the importance of the subject, some rejoiced to find a practical expression for a long smouldering interest.

As early as 1881 there were Auxiliaries in twenty States. In that year and the next, State after State and city after city were gained for the movement and in February, 1884, it was decided to begin the work of teaching. In the spring two missionaries were sent to the Poncas, Otoes and Pawnees, the Committee declaring its intention to work only among those tribes

where no religious work had been done, and to range itself with government as far as possible.

The Association was rapidly becoming a complete federation, two of the Auxiliaries forming Branches of their own, till in 1886 no less than eighty-three societies were banded together, and busy in forwarding the double work of influencing legislation through public opinion and of educating the Indians. Practice and experience were ripening the women's judgment in the conduct of affairs, and though struggling against immense odds of prejudice and indifference, the strong power of righteousness behind their efforts was distinctly felt, and they were enabled this year to spend \$6,600, as against \$240 in 1879. The strength of this organization, however, has never lain in money. Up to the present year its highest annual expenditure has been only \$28,000, and its action has always been cramped by want of funds, but it has had a positive and large share in creating the great revolution in public sentiment which has taken place in the last twenty years. Indian Commissioner Brown- ing wrote, "the influence of the Associa-

tion in its vigorous work both at home and in the field, is far-reaching," and the present Commissioner, Hon. W. A. Jones, in a late speech warmly approved the Association as "reaching the home, the family life and individual character, and thus doing what the government does not and cannot do." It has carried hope and heart to forty-seven special missions mostly its own, most of which have been passed on to churches or institutions which were glad to take them when once well established, leaving the Association free to open new fields. This it is continually doing as fast as its funds permit, and while much of its strength is necessarily engaged in raising these funds, it is constantly busy providing teachers, opening libraries, building hospitals, procuring professional training for quick-witted Indian youth, giving temperance instruction, sending clothing and comforts to the aged and helpless of seventy tribes, (to the amount of \$3,000 worth a year) and has now established a House of Industries, where women and girls are taught sewing, knitting, spinning, weaving, and other needed work. It has had a special loan fund of \$12,000, with which

to assist Indians in building houses and buying farming implements, sewing machines, stock, tools, etc., and the money so lent has been generally and gratefully returned. It keeps meanwhile a watchful eye upon everything that can affect the interests of its eager but ignorant clients, and raises frequently a warning voice to make the government aware of needs and abuses otherwise unreported.

If the present account were not a chronology rather than a history, it would be easy to bring up a crowd of interesting incidents connected with the work and with the journeys of investigation, lasting half a year at a time, made in furtherance of it.

But in the limited space at command, it seems advisable to give simply a sketch of what has been done by the Association in one tribe, and enable the reader to judge from that of the difficulties encountered and the improvement achieved, under varying circumstances, in the others.

The women of the Association do not claim credit for the whole of this advance in civilization. Their effort is to aid and supplement the government in its dealings with people often too ignorant to know

what they really need. They give practical teaching in the ways of daily life, they sustain all just demands upon the nation, and, more important than all, they offer the Indians a new point of view, and enlarge and brighten their relations with this world and the next.

The Navajos (Nav-a-hoes) are a large tribe of over twenty thousand souls, living on a reservation about one hundred miles square, lying partly in Arizona and partly in New Mexico. It is a rough and mountainous region, watered by a few tributaries of the Colorado River, but springs are rare, and the soil so dry that nothing but artificial irrigation can make it bear crops. There is however enough pasture for large flocks of sheep, whose flesh serves the Indians for food, and from whose wool they make blankets so firm, fine, and wrought in such brilliant colors that they fetch a high price. The Navajos are also, like other tribes in the Southwest, adepts in silver work and make handsome girdles, bangles, and other ornaments from the Mexican dollars which are the common currency in that part of the country. They were a peaceable people when the fiercer

tribes let them alone. They tended the sheep, sheared the wool, snared some small game, and raised a little corn. The women spun and wove the wool, and ground the corn between two stones, all the work being done in the most primitive and laborious manner. With these occupations they managed to pick up a precarious living till, about twenty years ago, the price of wool went down and at the same time, two or three uncommonly dry seasons ruined their crops, killed off many of their sheep, and brought them to such distress that it was necessary for Government to come to their assistance. This it did, in the perfunctory way in which governments usually act. Food was given, but little instruction, some tools and implements, but not the skill to use them ; sometimes the Agent was good, sometimes bad, but much more personal influence than the best man could exert over so large a district and so many savages, was needed for a radical improvement in their condition. No co-operation could be expected from the people themselves. If they had enough to eat they were content with a vast accompanying amount of dirt, ignorance and superstition. It was when

attention was drawn to their physical destitution, that the suffering and disease caused by their spiritual poverty became apparent and stirred charitable persons to take their case in hand. Their "medicine men" were sorcerers, who kept the whole people under a despotism of slavish terror. These pseudo doctors treated the sick in utter ignorance of hygienic and curative methods, and maintained their empire over the healthy by incantations, and threats of evil spirits, till daily life was all hedged about by demons, and the only safety lay in strict obedience to the commands of these artful rulers. The "medicine men" naturally hated change and innovation, and dreaded any improvement in the arts of life, for it cut short not only their power, but their fees. Their influence is still a serious obstacle to the progress of civilization, and yields only when white teachers, with extreme gentleness and tact, obtain admission to the sick in their close, smoky huts. When the Indians see for themselves, over and over again, what good nursing, cleanliness, and right medicine and the right food do toward curing diseases, trust arises in their hearts for these new friends and

counsellors, and, that trust once formed, it is easy to guide them, for they are very much like children, and become docile pupils under kind and steady treatment.

The Cambridge Branch of the Massachusetts Auxiliary took an early interest in the affairs of the Navajos, and has given constant support in sympathy and money, to the excellent field matrons sent there by the Indian Officer at Washington. The work of a field matron is always of varied character, but that of these women was exceptionally multifarious, owing to the great size of the Reservation, the distance of the Agency from their station, and the pressing need of irrigation to obtain food. Happily they were equal to the occasion. Mrs. Whyte died six years ago, but her coadjutor and successor, Mrs. Eldridge, has carried out their common plan of a large irrigating canal leading from the San Juan (Hu-an) river. This has been dug so thoroughly, that over six hundred acres are now watered by it and more than twenty families are settled on little farms made productive by the "Cambridge ditch," as it is called in grateful remembrance of the Society which gave the money for its

construction. The Indians themselves did the work, under Mrs. Eldridge's close personal supervision, and the growth of their intelligence, industry, pride and hope has been as marked as that of their fields of alfalfa, corn, wheat, melons and beans. When the mission was started there was hardly a house on the reservation. The Indians lived in "hogans," cabins without chimney or windows, or in brush huts, covered with skins or a blanket. The ground was their only bed, table, and seat. Now there are decent little houses where the light comes in and the smoke goes out, those two movements typifying the whole change from barbarism to civilization. There are good buildings for a school, a work-room, a small hospital, and a home for the field matron and her assistants. These buildings, their uses, and the lives of the devoted women who occupy them are the best of object lessons to the Indians, who throng to these teachers for every sort of help from dressing a cut finger to making a wedding gown, or from tending a sick child to ploughing a field or setting up a ferry boat.

The following letter shows in an interesting manner how some of their influence was acquired. It is from Mrs. Eldridge to one of the Cambridge ladies, and bears date January 18th, 1898.

My dear Mrs. F :—

The barrels came to us on Christmas Eve. Early in the morning the Navajos began to gather from all directions. The day before I had bought a very fat sheep, and had it cut up into small pieces, and had half a bushel of potatoes pared and sliced, a peck of onions and some rice prepared. So at daylight we got out the big caldron kettle and got our soup going. . . . About ten o'clock we had a simple song service and Miss T. and Mr. A. explained what Christmas means to us The day was beautiful and so warm and sunny that we had all the exercises outdoors They are very fond of the singing and of the little organ. At the close we had apples passed around, and by the time these were disposed of the dinner was ready. We gave them all soup, bread, and crackers, with plenty of coffee, and they had a great time eating and drink-

ing. After dinner we gave to each man, woman, and child, a bag of candy and popcorn, to nearly every woman a bag furnished with thread, buttons, needles, and a thimble. We had fifty-two such bags. .

. . . Then the socks and handkerchiefs soap, combs, and finally the toys and dolls. You should have seen the little brown hands reaching for the dolls. . . . I heard some child crying in a wagon and I looked it up and found a poor little fellow who had such sore eyes that he had to keep them covered all the time. I happened to have just one pocket knife and a bag of candy and a banana left, so I comforted his heart with them. It was a hard day—I haven't been so tired in a year—but it has been long years since so many of these people have had such a happy day and it must have done them good. And we hope and pray that some idea of a pitying, loving Father's care may find a lodgment in their hearts. Do you remember the knit chamber robe which was put in the barrel? I gave it to the oldest woman here; she must be between eighty and eighty-five. As I wrapped it around her I said, "Now this is for you, to keep you warm when it is

very cold." And she caught my hands in both of hers and said, "I thank you, my daughter," and her eyes filled with tears.

. . . . I am sure that you will rejoice with me when I tell you that so far as I know, all our workers have plenty to eat and have sold a good deal of corn and wheat."

The cordial loving spirit of this letter, combined with strong practical sense and judgment, explains the power which a few white women have gained over a host of dusky savages. Freely sacrificing all personal ease and comfort, they travel over this wild country by day and night, on foot, on horseback, or in wagons, at the call of the sick and suffering, carrying food and medicine, advising and inspiring men, women and children, till a new life is taking the place of the barbarism of twenty years ago. Cleanliness and industry are opening the way to hope, self-respect, and a healthy ambition. One or two more of Mrs. Eldridge's letters will present the scene more vividly than any description can do. "I should like to tell you how the Indians enjoy the magic-lantern pictures. One evening I had about a dozen of them here,

who came to talk over their troubles, and I showed them some of the pictures, and at last began on the scenes from the life of Christ. They were intensely interested, and when we came to the slide representing the shepherds caring for their flocks at night, and the angel appearing to them and announcing the birth of Christ, and then the heavenly host praising God, there was a rising from their seats, and little 'Oh! Oh!s' all over the room. These pictures seem especially attractive to them, and they say to us, "Why, these people dressed just as the Navajos do now, and were shepherds just as we are.' "

May 17, 1897.

"I wish you might see the land under the Cambridge ditch this spring. The men have grubbed a good deal more land, and put in larger crops than ever before. The ditch required much hard labor to put it in good condition, but it is now bank-full. I am likely to get in a very 'puffed up' frame of mind over that ditch and the people living under it. We have much sickness, colds and malaria, but we have been very successful, and have not had any

deaths except one old man, who died from extreme old age. I think he must have been nearly a hundred years old, for one of his daughters I should judge was at least eighty. Two years ago his horse threw him and broke two ribs. We cared for him and he got well again, and then his daughter met with an accident, and we took care of her. About eighteen months ago, we visited their camp, and stayed all night. There are several families of children, grand-children and great-grand-children, and they all came together in the evening, and we talked a long time with them by our interpreter's help. We found the old man very intelligent, and at last he said to me, 'My daughter, I have lived a long life, and soon now I shall away, and I am so full of pains I shall be glad to go.' 'But my father,' I said, 'where are you going?' He said, 'We Navajos have a story coming down to us from our fathers, that those of us who have done well shall, when we die, have a hogan very near the sun, always in warmth and light; those of us who are neither very bad nor very good will live farther from the sun, and those who have been very bad will always

live in the dark, away from the sun, but,' said he, 'I have turned neither to the right nor the left, I have kept a straight trail.' Then I told him of God and of His great love for us, of His word of which we could read and learn what His will toward us is, and of the Son by whose stripes we are healed and made clean and pure and fit to see His face. The old man listened, and when I was through he said, 'how many years have the white people known God's word?' I said, 'hundreds of years.' 'Why then,' he asked, 'have they never told us before?'

A few months ago I saw he was failing, and I promised to be with him to the last and to bury him, and we visited him often, carrying him food and clothing. He told us that at times his mind was like that of a little child, and he could think only of things that happened long ago, and then he said there were times when he could not think at all, and then he put words together into prayers to God.

Last week word came that Hade Johle wanted me. I went immediately to the camp and found him very near the end.

He was very glad to see us, Miss T. and me, calling us his daughters, and holding our hands in both of his. He lived through the day, and at evening Miss T. and the interpreter went home with the horses, and I stayed at the camp. Just before sundown I saw a change come over his face. I did not tell you that he could not breathe in the hogan, so his children had moved him out into a beautiful grove near the river and facing the west. He motioned me to raise his head, and lay for a long time watching the sunset and the golden haze on the Corrizos. He tried to talk but could not, so he put my hand to his mouth to see that he was almost gone, and then made the motion for death, trying to tell me he was dying. Then he lay with his head in my lap and holding my hand with both of his until almost the last, when he prepared to die as every Indian who is conscious does, by turning on the right side with one hand under the cheek, and the knees drawn up—one or two long breaths and he was gone. The son and daughter were with us, they but have all the horror of the Jews about touching a corpse, so I did not get much help in pre-

paring the body for burial. As soon as all was done they asked me if I would go with them to the hogan. I said, 'who will stay with the body?' They said, 'no one,' but I said, 'your hogan which is the nearest is a long way off, and the coyotes and dogs will come, if we do not stay,' but they were so afraid of Ah-chin-dee (the evil spirit) that they did not want to stay. So I told them to go to their hogan if they wished, but that I would stay there and watch, and so I spent the night watching the dead man laid out on the sheep-skins spread on the ground and covered with a blanket. The roar of the river, the full moon turning the leaves of the poplar trees to silver, the flickering of the camp fire, and the shadows and lights in the grove, make a thing to be long remembered, and I believe I am a stronger woman to-day for my work, for that night alone with the dead and with God.

The next morning Miss T. came with the interpreter and another young man who dug the grave, and we buried the old man whose feet had grown so weary walking the 'long trail,' and with a prayer we left him to his rest."

Within two years the Association has opened another Navajo station, at Two Gray Hills. This also is placed under Mrs. Eldridge's supervision, and what this means, with seventy miles of wild, rough country between, can be imagined. Two brave women live there, and beside the usual service have started a kindergarten. Some idea of the work can be gained from a few of their daily notes.

"FRIDAY. This morning made ointment and liniment and gave out some of both, as well as various medicines, and cleaned the medicine closet. Also made two shirts, one pair pants, a dress skirt for a woman, and had twenty-nine calls, besides giving out some clothing for the feeble and needy. One man had a bad foot to be dressed.

SATURDAY. Made two shirts, gave out medicines and some clothing.

MONDAY. Made shirts, dressed a man's hand bitten by a dog, gave out medicines and food, and made an easy chair out of a barrel." And so on. Here are a few of the kindergartner's notes :

"Last night one of our best Indians, from fifteen miles away, brought two of

his boys, bright little fellows of three and five. I had given the father some instruction before, and he had been trying to teach it to the children. Now he wanted another lesson, and the little brownies to have the benefit of it. So we sat round the table, father and tiny tots, all learning the same lesson till the "sand-man" came and I begged the father to let them go to sleep. The dear little things worked as hard as their father did, trying to repeat every word I said."

A great impulse was given to education among the Navajos as early as 1893, when fifteen of their men were selected to visit, at the expense of the Government, the "World's Fair" held at Chicago. The effect upon their minds was prodigious, and they lost no time in conveying it to their people. "My voice is gone," said one, "it is lost from telling what we saw." What struck and amazed them most was the number and activity of the "pale-faces." Said another, "I never dreamed of what I saw there. Now I have seen it. Coming back, I never slept for thinking of it. You should let your children go to school."

Among the good public works of the mission a chain ferry over the river must not be forgotten. The San Juan is a turbulent mountain stream, and had never been crossed save at difficult and dangerous fords. At Mrs. Eldridge's instance, the Government supplied a strong iron chain, secured to the rocks on either side, so that a large boat could be pulled to and fro, and a way opened to intercourse and market. As with the great ditch, the Indians did the work, but the field matron gave the idea, and directed every step of the performance.

One of the latest Auxiliaries of the Association is the Indian Industries League, founded in Boston, Mass., in 1893. It aims at opening a market for Indian labor all over the United States, and forwarding and assisting such native manufactures as already exist among the tribes. It has established a House of Industries on the Navajo Reservation where the wool which is its most valuable product, can be made into blankets and all sorts of saleable articles, with better appliances and greater nicety than before, and both men and women are delighted with this new oppor-

tunity of earning their living. The room is light and airy, and stands upon a five-acre lot adjoining the Reservation, given by Mrs. Eldridge, from her land in New Mexico.

The New York City Auxiliary has just given important help to the work of the Association for the Navajos by building a small but excellent hospital near the weaving room, with beds for ten patients. Its adobe* walls are eighteen inches thick, of hard and handsome bricks, made on the spot. The lumber, drawn eighty-five miles, is of the best, private liberality has furnished thorough appliances in baths, surgical instruments, etc., and two little Massachusetts boys have sent a fine Jersey cow for the comfort of sick Indians 4000 miles away. Mrs. Eldridge gave also thirty-five acres for the site of this hospital, and her assistants have rooms there, besides those of the resident doctor.

The difficulties of the Navajo Mission are those familiar to all Indian workers, and come far more from the white than the red men. The Indians are, for the most part, well disposed to learn the new ways

*Clay, kneaded into shape, and dried in the sun.

of thought and action which they see to be necessary to their very existence. If the Government would give the needed schools, stock, seeds and tools as promptly as it does generously, and would repress with a strong hand the liquor sellers and land grabbers who are the chief foes of the Indian, it would not be long before the elevating effect of all the various missions to this injured race would be broadly as well as distinctly apparent.

The North American Indian is of a fine savage stock, full of material for excellent character. He is patient, courageous, honest, reverent, faithful to a trust, and with strong family affections. This is the testimony of all, missionaries and soldiers alike, who have lived among Indians and treated them well. It is true also that they are indolent, vindictive, shockingly cruel in warfare, desperate gamblers in time of peace, and, since the whites have taught them the use of strong liquors, intemperate.

But there is no room for discouragement in all this. The Indian stands where the most advanced races have all stood in their day. Each has known the same tribal

environment of superstition, personal government, rude household contrivance, paint and feathers, ignorance and dirt, with this one great difference that while they worked slowly their own way up to civilization, with occasional outside stimulus, he is placed in immediate and inevitable contact with people whose daily life is ordered by arts and sciences far beyond his utmost imagination. This neighborhood, which should be a blessing, is too often a bane, engendering contempt on the one side, and suspicion on the other. But the growing sense of human brotherhood is quickening the slow heart of the world, despite wars and mistakes. It has stirred America to open space and freedom to the over-crowded thousands of Europe, and it now demands that she shall give her own aborigines a fair chance for life and happiness. The number of those Americans who feel the justice of this claim is yet small in proportion to the unthinking multitude who ignore it, but it increases, like every harvest that springs from the divine seeds of Love and Duty, and it will gain in power, till the nation shall ungrudgingly share with the red men the

education and opportunity which have made herself great, and which are all they need to convert them into good citizens and useful members of the commonwealth.

The progress made within a century bears out this assertion. Four-fifths of the Indians now support themselves by respectable industry. Most of these are farmers or stock-raisers, a large number are mechanics, and some, both men and women, are taking good rank as doctors, lawyers, ministers, nurses, journalists, and assistant teachers. A religion of hope, of joy, and of peace has taken strong root among them. The condition of the women has greatly improved, although, from long custom, the elder ones still fall short of the men in intelligence. Twenty-five thousand of the children are in school, and Congress, which began with giving \$10,000 annually for their education in 1819, and raised that sum to \$20,000 in 1877, now cheerfully appropriates more than two and a half millions of dollars a year and finds it an economy.*

* A similar instance of political economy is shown in the following extract from an official statement: 'In seven years it cost the United States \$1,848,000 for the support of 2200 Dakota Indians in a savage state. The cost for seven years after they were Christianized was \$120,000; a saving of \$1,728,000 or \$246,857 per annum.'

One or two incidents will show the change of character wrought within these people by wise and gentle treatment. A prominent worker of the Association, the president of the Connecticut Auxiliary, visiting some Indian homes in the far West, was very curious to hear the war-whoop, which makes so fearful a part all the old Indian stories, and talking with a man who had often been on the war-path in former years, she asked him to let her hear it. "But" she says, "to my surprise he refused to do so. He looked at me for a moment quietly and gravely, and then said: 'Me no want to do it; no have war-whoops any more; me shot 'em all off long ago; me all same white man now; no more fight, no more war-whoop; me too busy now,' and he waved his hand toward a couple of heaped up hay carts just turning into the yard. This told the whole story. He had worked and enjoyed it, and there was neither time nor disposition for anything else.'" The other story is from a description of the Association's work among the Apaches, one of the fiercest of all the tribes. They had been overcome by military force, and while in

captivity at a fort in Alabama, some four hundred of them came under our influence and the Massachusetts Auxiliary sent teachers for the children. The report says : "One striking instance of the new light thrown upon the young Indian's life by these teachers is the formation among the older boys of a guard of honor for the girls, whom the younger fry, in old Indian fashion, were disposed to hustle and annoy. This is a true order of chivalry, and shines out upon the dark background of the ordinary savage contempt for women, as knight errantry itself does on the gloom of the Middle Ages. Miss Shepard aims to lead her flock, not to drive them. She does not attack their old familiar customs with disgust, but treats them with kindly consideration while advising better, and she has just met with a signal reward for her patience and tact, in a voluntary request from the boys to have their hair cut short. The amount of barbarism cut off with those elf-locks can hardly be over-estimated. The love of savage decoration, the warrior's grasp of the scalp-lock, the wild unkempt scorn of civilization, all fell

before those scissors, and a new vista of progress is unveiled."

Such instances as these multiplied in a thousand ways, fill high our hearts with hope that the Indian question in America will before long be a thing of the past, and that a few generations more will see the Indians received into the common life of the nation. Upon the sturdy Anglo-Saxon stock, the central stem of the United States, have been grafted in turn the wit and muscle of the Irish, the thrift of the Scotch, the versatility and grace of the French, the solidity of the Germans, and lately some untried sprouts of the Slavic races. The composite growth appears to thrive, and a strong branch of the aboriginal American, calm, deliberate and dignified in the consideration of public affairs, will add to the symmetry and vigor of the stately tree.

Then, and not till then, may the women of the Indian Association gratefully retire from the field of labor, bearing with them the sheaves of victory, justice, and peace.

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FOR 1901

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